

## §218.237

(d) The Navy will continue to assess the data collected by its undersea arrays and work toward making some portion of that data, after appropriate security reviews, available to scientists with appropriate clearances. Any portions of the analyses conducted by these scientists based on these data that are determined to be unclassified after appropriate security reviews will be made publically available. The Navy will provide a status update to NMFS when they submit their annual application.

(e) Following the Scientific Advisory Group's (SAG) submission of findings, and assuming the SAG recommends going forward with beaked whale and/or harbor porpoise monitoring/research, the Navy will either:

(1) Draft a plan of action outlining their strategy for implementing the SAG's recommendations; or

(2) Describe in writing why none of the SAG's recommendations are feasible and meet with NMFS to discuss any other potential options.

### §218.237 Applications for Letters of Authorization.

(a) To incidentally take marine mammals pursuant to these regulations, the U.S. Navy authority conducting the activity identified in §218.230 must apply for and obtain a Letter of Authorization in accordance with §216.106.

(b) The application for a Letter of Authorization must be submitted to the Director, Office of Protected Resources, NMFS, at least 60 days before the date that either the vessel is scheduled to begin conducting SURTASS LFA sonar operations or the previous Letter of Authorization is scheduled to expire.

(c) All applications for a Letter of Authorization must include the following information:

(1) The date(s), duration, and the area(s) where the vessel's activity will occur;

(2) The species and/or stock(s) of marine mammals likely to be found within each area;

(3) The type of incidental taking authorization requested (i.e., take by Level A and/or Level B harassment);

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(4) The estimated percentage and numbers of marine mammal species/stocks potentially affected in each area for the period of effectiveness of the Letter of Authorization; and

(5) The means of accomplishing the necessary monitoring and reporting that will result in increased knowledge of the species and the level of taking or impacts on marine mammal populations.

(d) The National Marine Fisheries Service will review an application for a Letter of Authorization in accordance with §216.104(b) and, if adequate and complete, issue a Letter of Authorization.

### §218.238 Letters of Authorization.

(a) A Letter of Authorization, unless suspended or revoked, will be valid for a period of time not to exceed one year, but may be renewed annually subject to renewal conditions in §218.239.

(b) Each Letter of Authorization will set forth:

(1) Permissible methods of incidental taking;

(2) Authorized geographic areas for incidental takings;

(3) Means of effecting the least practicable adverse impact on the species of marine mammals authorized for taking, their habitat, and the availability of the species for subsistence uses; and

(4) Requirements for monitoring and reporting incidental take.

(c) Issuance of a letter of authorization will be based on a determination that the level of taking will be consistent with the findings made for the total taking allowable under these regulations.

(d) Notice of issuance or denial of an application for a Letter of Authorization will be published in the FEDERAL REGISTER within 30 days of a determination.

### §218.239 Renewal of Letters of Authorization.

(a) A Letter of Authorization issued for the activity identified in §218.230 may be renewed upon:

(1) Notification to NMFS that the activity described in the application submitted under §218.237 will be undertaken and that there will not be a substantial modification to the described